NCA
VOC FOR PGM/FN
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U.S.-SOVIET PROGRESS ON ARMS CONTROL

ANNCR:

U.S. AND SOVIET ARMS NEGOTIATORS HAVE JUST COMPLETED A NEW ROUND OF DISCUSSIONS ON LIMITING THE SALE OF CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS TO OTHER COUNTRIES. SOME PROGRESS WAS MADE, AS WE HEAR IN THIS BACKGROUND REPORT BY SEAN KELLY:

VOICE:

THE CONTINUING NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN MOSCOW AND WASHINGTON ON RESTRAINING CONVENTIONAL ARMS SALES HAVE BEEN SOMEWHAT OVERSHADOWED BY THE PROTRACTED DISCUSSIONS ON LIMITING STRATEGIC -- OR NUCLEAR -- WEAPONS. THE SALT TALKS GET THE HEADLINES, WHILE THE RELATIVELY UNPUBLICIZED NEGOTIATIONS ON RESTRAINING THE ARMS TRADE FREQUENTLY GO UNNOTICED.

THIS MAY CHANGE SOON. PROGRESS IS BEING REPORTED OUT OF THE LATEST ROUND OF DISCUSSIONS -- WHICH ENDED IN HELSINKI LAST WEEK. U.S. OFFICIALS DO NOT SPEAK IN TERMS OF A DRAMATIC BREAK-THROUGH, BUT THEY DO GO AS FAR AS TO SAY THAT THEY NOW EXPECT CONCRETE RESULTS WHEN THE TWO SIDES MEET AGAIN IN DECEMBER.

THE TALKS HAVE GROWN OUT OF THE U.S. CONVICTION THAT -- AS THE WORLD'S TWO LEADING ARMS SUPPLIERS -- THE SOVIET UNION AND THE UNITED STATES HAVE A SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY TO HELP BRING ABOUT SOME MEASURE OF RESTRAINT IN THE INTERNATIONAL ARMS TRADE -- A BUSINESS WHICH IS NOW TOTALLING OVER TWENTY THOUSAND MILLION DOLLARS A YEAR IN SIGNED CONTRACTS.

MUCH OF THIS MONEY IS BEING SPENT BY THIRD WORLD NATIONS WHERE DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES HAVE BEEN SACRIFICED IN FAVOR OF BUILDING UP DEFENSE FORCES, FREQUENTLY THROUGH THE PURCHASE OF SOPHISTICATED -- AND THEREFORE EXPENSIVE -- JET FIGHTER AIRCRAFT. IN A RECENT

STUDY OF THE ARMS TRADE, THE U.S. ARMS CONTROL AND DISARMAMENT AGENCY NOTED THAT THE UNITED STATES AND THE SOVIET UNION ACCOUNTED FOR APPROXIMATELY TWO-THIRDS OF THE VALUE OF ARMS EXPORTED IN 1976. FRANCE, WEST GERMANY, AND THE UNITED KINGDOM PROVIDED MOST OF THE REST, ALTHOUGH THE STUDY REPORTED THAT NEARLY FIFTY NATIONS EXPORTED ARMS OF SOME KIND IN 1976, HALF OF THEM MORE THAN IN ANY PREVIOUS YEAR.

IN HIS 1976 CAMPAIGN FOR THE PRESIDENCY, JUMMY CARTER MADE FREQUENT MENTION OF HIS CONCERN OVER THE U.S. ROLE, AS HE PUT IT, AS THE WORLD'S LEADING ARMS SALESMAN. SINCE THEN, HE HAS ANNOUNCED A NEW ARMS SALES POLICY WHICH IMPOSES UNILATERAL RESTRAINTS ON SOME U.S. SALES. OVERALL FIGURES HAVE INCREASED, HOWEVER, AND THIS FACT HAS NOT PASSED UNNOTICED BY CRITICS OF THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION.

WHICH IS WHY THE REPORTS OF PROGRESS IN THE TALKS WITH MOSCOW ARE BEING PARTICULARLY WELCOMED HERE AT THIS TIME.

WJL/RD